

proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact which cannot be resolved on the basis of available information of record, and that the case is anticipated to involve the submission of extensive evidence, or the Administration determines that it is otherwise appropriate, the Administration may issue an order referring the case to an Administrative Law Judge for oral evidentiary hearing. Such hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in 46 CFR part 201. The Administration may resolve issues of intervention in such order or refer such issues to the Administrative Law Judge. The burden of establishing that there is a disputed issue of material fact is upon the party seeking the oral evidentiary hearing.

(b) *Hearing on Submission of Written Evidence and Argument:* If, upon review of the application, answers, petitions to intervene and replies, the Administration determines that the proceeding involves a disputed issue of material fact which cannot be resolved on the basis of available information of record, but which is not anticipated to involve the submission of extensive evidence, the Administration may fulfill the hearing requirement in sections 605(c) and 805(a) of the Act by rendering a decision solely on the merits of papers submitted, provided that a full and true disclosure of the facts is made and such procedure is fair to all parties. The Administration may, in its discretion, direct the submission of briefs on legal issues together with evidence in written form, and/or the holding of oral argument before the Administration prior to issuing its final decision on the proceeding.

(c) *Show Cause Proceeding:* If, upon review of the application, answers, petitions to intervene and replies, the Administration determines that the proceeding does not or is not likely to involve a disputed issue of material fact or that if such facts exist they can be resolved on the basis of available information subject to official notice, and if the case is not anticipated to involve the submission of extensive evidence, the Administration may determine to handle the matter by show-cause proceeding. In that event, it will issue a decision setting out its tentative conclusions on all of the matters of fact

and law at issue in the proceeding. A Notice summarizing such decision shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER in accordance with 46 CFR 201.72. Interested persons may file comments, including support or rebuttal for any matter officially noticed, within 30 days of the date of service of the tentative decision and responses to such comments shall be filed within ten days thereafter unless a shorter or longer period is provided by the Administration for such comments and answers.

§ 203.6 Oral evidentiary hearing before one or more members.

If an oral evidentiary hearing is to be conducted, the Maritime Administration, or the Maritime Subsidy Board or one or more of its members, may conduct such hearing. A member who is not present at the hearing may participate in the consideration and the decision of the case where the oral evidentiary hearing, if held, has been stenographically recorded in full and transcribed for the member's review.

PART 204—CLAIMS AGAINST THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE FEDERAL TORT CLAIMS ACT

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AUTHORITY: 28 U.S.C. 2672; 28 CFR 14.11; 49 CFR 1.45(a) (2) and (3).

SOURCE: 50 FR 25711, June 21, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 204.1 Scope and procedure for filing claims.

This part prescribes the requirements and procedure for administrative settlement of claims against the United States, involving the Maritime Administration, under the Federal Tort Claims Act, based on death, personal

injury, or damage to or loss of property. The controlling regulations are promulgated by the Department of Justice at 28 CFR Part 14—Administrative Claims Under Federal Tort Claims Act. These regulations supplement those of the Department of Justice and provide specific guidance regarding claims processing in the Maritime Administration.

§ 204.2 Claims payable.

Claims for death, personal injury, or damage to or loss of real or personal property are payable when the death, injury or damage is caused by a negligent or wrongful act or omission of an employee of the Maritime Administration, while acting within the scope of employment and under circumstances in which the United States, if a private person, would be liable to the claimant under the law of the place where the act or omission occurred.

§ 204.3 Claims not payable.

A claim is not payable under the regulations in this part 204, if such tort claim is excluded from the scope of the Federal Tort Claims Act, as amended, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 2680.

§ 204.4 Time limitations on claims.

(a) A claim can be settled only if presented in writing within two years after it accrues.

(b) The two year statute of limitations is not tolled until the Maritime Administration receives from a claimant, or the claimant's duly authorized agent or legal representative, an executed Standard Form 95, "Claims for Damage, Injury, or Death," or written notification of an incident, together with a claim for money damages in a sum certain, for death, personal injury, or damage to or loss of real or personal property. When a claim is received in any office, mail unit, or other Maritime Administration activity which does not have settlement authority over the claim, such office, unit or activity shall transmit it to the official vested with such authority without delay (see § 204.13, this part).

§ 204.5 Notification to claimant of action on claim.

(a) If a claim is approved (either for the amount claimed or less than such full amount), the claimant, prior to the disbursement of an award, shall sign a document releasing the United States, its agents and employees from all further claims relating to the incident giving rise to the approved claim.

(b) If the claim is finally denied, the official vested with such authority shall inform the claimant by certified or registered mail of the final denial of the claim. Notification of final denial shall include a statement that a claimant who does not accept or is dissatisfied with the action may institute suit against the United States not later than six months after the date of mailing of the notice of final denial.

(c) A claimant may regard the failure of the Maritime Administration to make a final disposition of a claim within six months after the date of receipt of the claim by the Maritime Administration as a final denial for the purpose of filing suit.

§ 204.6 Payment of claims.

(a) Once the amount to be paid has been agreed upon, the agency shall attempt to forward a check for such amount to the claimant within thirty days.

(b) If a claimant is represented by an attorney, both the claimant and the claimant's attorney shall be designated as payees on any check delivered to the claimant's attorney.

§ 204.7 Delegation of authority.

(a) Subject to written approval of the Attorney General of the United States of any payment in excess of \$100,000, the Chief Counsel of the Maritime Administration is authorized to deny or settle and authorize payment of tort claims.

(b) The Associate Administrator for Administration is authorized to deny or settle and authorize payment of all tort claims in an amount not exceeding \$50,000.

(c) The Superintendent, United States Merchant Marine Academy (Academy), is authorized to deny or settle and authorize payment of tort claims originating from occurrences at